

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MADRID 07605 050748Z

21

ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 EUR-12 NEA-06 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00

COME-00 FRB-01 INR-05 NSAE-00 RSC-01 TRSE-00 XMB-02

OPIC-03 SP-02 CIEP-01 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 NSC-05

SS-15 STR-01 CEA-01 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 L-02 PA-01

PRS-01 USIA-06 FEA-01 INT-05 OES-03 /103 W

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R 041645Z DEC 74

FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 585

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY MEXICO

AMEMBASSY OTAWA

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY LONDON

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ETRD, EIND, EMIND, SP

SUBJ: MERCURY PRODUCERS CONFERENCE

REF: STATE 243998

1. EMBOFF CALLED ON FINANCE MINISTRY OFFICIAL ANSELO TORRES, TECHNICAL DIRECTOR STATE OWNED ALMADEN MINE, LARGEST MERCURY MINING OPERATION IN WORLD AND ONLY ONE CURRENTLY OPERATING IN SPAIN. TORRES STATED PURPOSE MERCURY PRODUCERS MEETING WAS ORGANIZE "INTERNATIONAL MERCURY INSTITUTE" WHOSE MAIN PURPOSES WOULD BE; A. DEFEND MERCURY AGAINST STRONG ATTACKS BY ENVIRONMENTAL AND ANTI-POLLUTION GROUPS, AND B. DEVELOP NEW USES FOR MERCURY. HE BELIEVES THESE

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PAGE 02 MADRID 07605 050748Z

ARE ESSENTIAL GOALS AND, WHILE NOT SURE EXACT DATE, IS

CONVINCED "INSTITUTE" WILL BE FORMED WITHIN NEXT YEAR.

2. TORRES SAID SPAIN, ITALY AND ALGERIA WERE SELECTED AS "ACTING SECRETARIAT" AT MAY MEETING AND CHARGED WITH DRAFTING STRUCTURE FOR ORGINIZATION. STICKY PROBLEMS ARE REPRESENTATION AND FINANCIANG. SPECIFICALLY SHOULD EACH MEMBER CONTRIBUTE EQUAL AMOUNTS TOWARD OPERATING EXPENSES AND THUS ENJOY EQUAL VOICE IN ORGANIZATION OR SHOULD CONTRIBUTIONS AND REPRESENTATTION BE GEARED TO COUNTRY'S SHARE TOTAL WORLD PRODUCTION.

3. RESPONDING TO DIRECT QUESTION TORRES STATED ALGERIAN REPRESENTATIVE AT MAY MEETING PROPOSED USING GROUP FOR "ECONOMIC" PURPOSES, SPECIFICALLY PRICE SETTING A LA OPEC. THIS PROPOSAL SHELVED BY OTHERS AND GOALS CONFINED TO THOSE STATED ABOVE.

4. TORRES SAID HE HAD IMPRESSION OCTOBER MEETING SCHEDULED TURKEY POSTPONED DUE TURKISH POLITICAL PROBLEMS. UNDERSTANDS MEETING RESET FOR NEXT MAY IN TURKEY.

5. COMMENT: SPAIN IS LARGEST PRODUCER AND EXPORTER MERCURY IN WORLD THUS ANY MOVE TOWARD PRODUCERS CARTEL WOULD NECESSARILY DEPEND ITS COOPERATION. GOVERNMENT ALREADY CONTROLS PRICE SPANISH MERCURY BY REQUIRING ALL PRODUCTION BE SOLD TO MINISTRY OF FINANCE FOR GOVERNMENT SALE AT HOME AND ABROAD. HOWEVER, EMBASSY BELIEVES SPANISH POSITION ON MERCURY PRODUCERS GROUP REFLECTS MORE CONCERN WITH PROTECTING AND EXPANDING MARKET THAN INTEREST IN PRICE FIXING ARRANGEMENT. THIS MAY BE DUE CURRENT WEAKNESS DEMAND CAUSED BY INTER ALIA ENVIRONMENTALISTS PROTESTS MERCURY CONTAMINATION. MERCURY NOT ENJOYING "SELLERS MARKET" LIKE PETROLEUM SO NOT PROPITIOUS TIME PROPOSE PRICE CONTROL APPARATUS. ON OTHER HAND EXPECT SPAIN CONTINUE EFFORT ORGANIZE "INSTITUTE" TO DEFEND AND PROMOTE USE MERCURY.
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